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STATE FOR WHA/PDA CHAD WEST, WHA/CAR FOR JROSHOLT, ECA FOR  
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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [OEXC](#) [NS](#)

SUBJECT: "BEST KEPT SECRET?" CULTURAL PROGRAMMING WITH  
ALMOST NO MONEY

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¶1. (U) Summary: With PD resources already nearly exhausted, Post has sought to maintain cultural and outreach programming through the use of "window of opportunity" speakers. Taking advantage of the presence of U.S. university professor of ethnomusicology Jonathan C. Kramer, on March 5 Post organized a lecture/discussion at local restaurant/cafe "Tori Oso" on the topic "Suriname Music: An Outsider's Perspective." Kramer effectively related his own personal musical "journey" to the Surinamese musical cultures and established a bond with the audience by sharing revelations about music he had learned from Surinamers in the few days he had spent in Suriname. The event drew 40 people, resulted in a newspaper article which used Kramer's phrase for Surinamese music, "best kept secret," as its title, further expanded Post's growing list of cultural contacts and intellectuals, and continued to demonstrate the U.S. Embassy's commitment to strengthen cultural ties and promote mutual understanding, thus reinforcing the public diplomacy goals established in Post's Mission Strategic Plan (MSP).  
END SUMMARY

¶2. (U) Type of Program: Post-organized "Window of Opportunity" Speaker. MSP goal addressed: Goal No. 1: "Mutual U.S./Suriname appreciation and respect contributing to a more effective partnership."

¶3. (U) Background: During an early February discussion of Maroon culture in Suriname by Cyriel Eersteling as part of the Post Language Program, the DCM learned that Eersteling was helping to coordinate the visit of U.S. ethnomusicologist Jonathan C. Kramer, Ph.D., to Suriname. At the DCM's suggestion Eersteling agreed to approach Kramer about doing a public lecture under the auspices of the Embassy. Kramer enthusiastically agreed. When Post learned that our traditional conference site at the Cultural Center of Suriname was still undergoing renovations, the DCM, PolOff, and Eersteling approached Mr. Osje Braumuller, owner of the "Tori Oso," a restaurant/cafe well known a venue for cultural activities, jazz, and as a meeting place for intellectuals of Surinamese politics, government, media, and literary figures.

¶4. (U) Evaluation of the Speaker: Dr. Kramer was a spellbinding speaker. Weaving his own personal journey through music into the fabric of Surinamese musical traditions, Kramer related how one night 20 years ago he had had a vivid dream about a multi-ethnic, musically diverse place like Suriname. So his first visit to Suriname in early March 2008 was actually the realization of that dream 20 years ago. In the few days Dr. Kramer had been in Suriname prior to his public lecture at Tori Oso, Cyriel Eersteling, a

local tour operator and historian of the Maroons (descendants of escaped slaves) - and himself a Maroon - already had shown Kramer much of the Surinamese culture and had introduced him to intellectuals, historians, and musicians from across the ethnic and cultural spectrum of Surinamese society. Kramer effectively wove stories of those Surinamers he had met into his talk, further captivating his listeners. Several audience members made a point of approaching the DCM following the talk to praise Kramer for his presentation, his knowledge, and his understanding of Surinamers. (Note: Kramer is a former Peace Corps Volunteers and former Fulbright Senior Fellow in India and South Korea.) Post enthusiastically recommends Kramer for the U.S. Speaker Program and future Fulbright opportunities for posts seeking a speaker or specialist on music.

¶5. (U) Program Coordination: Cyriel Eersteling was the lynchpin that made this program possible. He was the initial point of contact with Dr. Kramer, proposed and helped secure the venue "Tori Oso," and informed cultural contacts about this event, which drew 40 interested audience members, most of whom stayed on after a short break to engage in further discussion of music. Eersteling also arranged for a research/scholar from the Ministry of Education and Community Development to act as emcee and brought in a local women's a cappella singing group whose performances before and after Kramer spoke provided the perfect "bookends" to the lecture.

¶6. (U) Program Costs: Dr. Kramer eagerly accepted the speaking engagement, aware that Post had no funding for honorarium expenses. Kramer had recently been awarded an advance from a publisher to write a college textbook about music, and he used those funds to pay for this trip. Eersteling handled all arrangements for the a cappella singing group. Post's only cost was a relatively small amount of representational funds spent on Kramer, Eersteling, the singers, the moderator, and several others involved with the program.

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¶7. (U) Impact of the Program: Kramer's lecture provided the opportunity to further demonstrate the Embassy's ongoing commitment to promoting mutual understanding through cultural dialogue. The Embassy's list of cultural contacts and intellectuals within Surinamese society continues to grow, providing additional opportunities to promote people-to-people diplomacy. The public-private partnership exhibited on this program - and the willingness of Kramer and co-sponsors to waive any honorarium or charges - enabled Post to continue its outreach without expending any program funds.

A journalist invited by the Embassy to cover and participate on the event published an excellent article with photo.

SCHREIBER HUGHES